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SUBJECT: BULGARIA'S VIEW ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: (A) STATE 57036, (B) STATE 55461

¶1. (U) We delivered reftel A talking points to Ambassador Kamen Velichkov, Director of the MFA's UN and Global Issues Directorate, on 12 April. Velichkov stressed the importance of the Human Rights Council (HRC) to Bulgaria's UN agenda, and said that the Foreign Minister might raise the issue with Secretary Rice during her visit to Sofia later this month.

¶2. (SBU) Velichkov did not commit Bulgaria to a specific course of action, but said Bulgaria shared the U.S.'s view that Human Rights Council candidates must be held to a high standard. He said that Bulgaria would fully implement any EU consensus criteria for HRC candidates. Referencing the list of problematic countries mentioned in reftel B, Velichkov predicted that the EU would issue its own, larger, list in the coming weeks. In the case of the HRC, Bulgaria would first evaluate whether a country was a suitable candidate based on democratic and human rights criteria, and only then attempt to strike a deal for reciprocal support. As an example, Velichkov cited an agreement Bulgaria had reached with France to support its HRC candidacy in exchange for French support for Bulgaria's ECOSOC bid.

¶3. (SBU) Velichkov said the GOB "regrets" the U.S. decision not to run and worried that the geographical allocation of the council led to a situation where "the Eastern European group has three candidates per seat, while the African group has three seats per candidate." He also suggested that membership in the Community of Democracies could be a valuable criteria for HRC candidates.

BEYRLE